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TO THE SEEKER AFTER CHRIST.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

My fellow-traveler to eternity, are you now seeking after Christ? To make this search successful, two or three things must not be forgotten.

1. Remember, then, my anxious friend, in the first place, that simply to *feel* anxious is not enough. You may have great depth and intensity of feeling; it may sometimes amount to agony. If that feeling is the legitimate contrition of a conscience awakened to the enormity of sin, then thank God for it. But do not be content with mere feeling. Tears never yet saved a soul. Hell is full of weepers weeping over lost opportunities, perhaps over the rejection of an offered Savior. Your Bible does not say, Weep and be saved. It says, Believe and be saved. *Faith is better than feeling.* Even faith in the abstract is not enough; without "works," without *action*, faith is dead. "The devils believe and tremble." There is not an atheist, no! nor an indifferent trifler, in the world of woe. The devils believe, but they do not obey God or love God. You must *obey* as well as believe. Begin, then, to practice on your first promptings of duty. Try to walk; if not able to walk, then creep; but do not lie still, vainly longing to be a Christian, without trying to be a Christian. Do not wait for more emotion. Act out your present feelings. Begin to discharge duty *from principle* and with a purpose to please Christ. We will not dictate what it shall be; but let us ask a suggestive question or two. Have you ever prayed with your family? Or if you have no family, have you ever prayed with your room-mate? Try it. No matter if there is some staring, or even some smiling, People sometimes smile to keep from crying. You need to

pray, where your prayer will do yourself good at the same time that it does others good. Have you an intimate friend or kinsman that is yet living without God? Then take him by the hand, and invite him to Christ. Helping others, you will help yourself. And it is well to begin practicing the generousities of the Gospel at once. Christ will rejoice in the honor you bring to him by trying to lead a sinner unto him.

Do you owe an old debt, that was outlawed long ago? Then go and astonish your *quondam* creditor by paying it up in full. Let him see that you are beginning to practice that Divine code which says: "Owe no man anything—but love." In some way, and in every possible way, crystallize your religious feelings into religious acts. You never will be saved by works; but let us tell you most solemnly that you never will be saved *without works*. You must "keep the commandments," or the love of Christ can not be within you.

2. Do not ask God to save you precisely as he has saved some others of whom you have read or heard. Do not judge your feelings by theirs. Judge yourself by the Bible, and do not say: "Why am I not wrought upon just as my friend A—— was?" "Why do I not get those views of Christ which Mr. B—— has?" God is a sovereign, and will save you in his own way—not in yours. He no more requires you to pass through the same experience with A—— and B—— than he requires you to look like them or to dress like them. His command is: *Repent, and believe on Christ*. Are you honestly and prayerfully struggling to do that? Then you are beginning to have a spiritual experience of your own; and one of its beauties will be that it resembles exactly no other human experience under the sun. O, how rich God is! He does not need to copy himself. He loveth to please his own sovereign skill. Some hearts he opens with the gentlest touch of his love; others he pryeth open with the heavy bar of arousing judgments. Some sinners are sweetly and quietly won to Christ; others are driven to him through the hail-storm of threatenings and the thunderings of an upbraiding conscience. Spurgeon pithily remarks: "When the lofty palm of Zeilan puts forth its flower, the sheath bursts with a report which echoes through the forest; but

thousands of other plants of equal beauty open in the morning, and the very dew-drops hear no sound; so, many souls blossom into grace, and the world hears neither whirlwind nor moral hurricane."

3. Let me entreat you not to be discouraged if your searchings after the Savior do not bring an immediate assurance of pardon and peace. Christ parried the Syrophenician woman's entreaties in order to test the sincerity of her faith. If a heart's happy hope were gained too easily, it might be valued too lightly. Give not up, my friend! if every hour were required to be spent in the search for Jesus until your dying day. But no such protracted experience need be yours. I fear that you do not grasp the full meaning of God's permission to come "with *boldness*" to the throne of grace. Ask what you want and *all* you want. You are not a stranger at the door of the Great King. The King's Son is ready himself to take in your petition, and intercede with his Almighty Father for you, and to press your suit. Despair never saved a sinner yet. We are "saved by hope." You lose everything by discouragement and retreat. You gain everything by pressing on. Suppose that Columbus, when within a few leagues of the West Indies, had yielded to despair, and sailed homeward. It was the *last league sailed over* that gave immortality to him, and a new continent to civilization. So it will be the last decisive step of surrendering your whole soul to Christ that unlocks to you the eternal glories of the heavenly inheritance.

I will not insult you by hinting even that you are not to be deterred by fear of ridicule. Only a fool is thus pushed back by a straw. He who is more afraid of the empty laugh of a trifler than he is of the indignant frown of a holy God, surely deserves to be cast off forever. There is but one way to manage the nettle of ridicule; touch it timidly and it shall prick thee, but grasp it with a firm hand and it crushes into a handful of down. Those who laugh at you to-day will love you to-morrow, when they see you are too earnest to be trifled with.

4. Our last brief counsel is to *cherish the Holy Spirit*. He may be visiting you for the last time. His agency is indispensable. If he leaves you, you are lost. You need

him to conquer your stubborn will, to change your affections from hatred to love of God, and to purify the heart. He may be easily grieved. Quench not the Spirit. Incidents to illustrate this danger are never out of place, and the following touching narrative has just met my eye. It fell from the lips of a faithful minister now in heaven. Said he:

"During a revival of religion in Yale College, several years ago, two young men were awakened at the same time. One of them had been remarkably correct in his general deportment, and was amiable in his disposition; the other was a wild, frolicsome, sportive youth. As they walked one evening, they agreed to call upon the professor of theology and make known to him their anxiety, and seek advice. They came to the gate, when the amiable young man leaned over the fence and said: 'I believe I won't go in; I do n't know that it will do me any good.' His companion replied: 'You can do as you please; but, for myself, I feel that I need all the counsel that men of experience can give; I am resolved to go in.' Here they parted. The former passed on. He smothered the flame in his own breast, and shrunk from the cross and from Christian counsel. He was soon found to be declining, not only in religious feeling, but in correctness of moral deportment; and, before the time to graduate arrived, he had wandered so far as to be expelled from college for immorality; he sunk rapidly in vice, went to the West Indies, and there died, not long after, a miserable sot. The other went in, opened his heart, and received direction in the way of life. He soon found peace in believing, entered the ministry, and *now stands before you, a redeemed sinner, saved by grace.*"

Lay down this tract, inquiring friend, and betake yourself to prayer. Delay not an hour. On the delay of an hour—so insulting to the waiting Savior—hangs guilt enough to sink a soul. Life and death are set before you. Nothing is more certain than the uncertainty of human life. Tomorrow you may be wrapped in your shroud, and your spirit be summoned to the presence of its God. What thou doest, do quickly.